Lifecourse epidemiology and public health interventions: reconciling research advances

Short report following meeting
Professor Amanda Sacker, UCL and Dr Michelle Kelly-Irving, Toulouse

Executive Summary
A workshop on “Lifecourse epidemiology and public health interventions: reconciling research advances” was funded by the French Embassy and took place on 8th – 9th July 2015 in Room 544, 1-19 Torrington Place, University College London. The original aims of the workshop were to bring together two spheres of health research:
a) lifecourse research on the biological embodiment of the social environment
b) research on public health interventions to reduce health inequalities.

The workshop was attended by 8 academics and researchers from France, of whom 6 were from the INSERM Epidemiology unit in Toulouse (UMR1027), 1 from INED, Paris, and 1 from the clinical investigation unit in La Réunion (CIC-EC). Thirteen UCL academics participated together with 3 academics having honorary positions in SLMS, UCL. The workshop is considered to have been extremely successful by all participants, with all the objectives having been achieved and with a substantial number of initiatives for future collaboration planned. Abstracts for joint publications to a conference are planned, and exchanges and a follow-up workshop discussed.

Workshop programme

Day 1: 13h00-17h30

13h00: Introduction 10 min  Amanda Sacker

13h15-15h00
Session 1. Presentations: What is the current evidence for the social-to-biological transition?
Chair: Afshin Zilanawala
- Rebecca Lacey (20 min). Work-family life courses and markers of stress and inflammation in mid-life: evidence from the National Child Development Study
- Cristina Barbosa Solis (20 min). Parental Socio-Economic Position and Allostatic Load in Mid-Life: a Life Course Approach Using the National Child Development Study
- Jessica Abel (20 min). Chronic sleep disturbance, recurrent short sleep and cortisol in older adults
Open discussion on session 1. (45 mins)
Chair: Lidia Panico

Coffee/ Tea Break 15 mins

15h20-17h30
Session 2. Presentations: Intervention oriented research: theoretical considerations and practical applications
Chair: Noriko Cable

- **Melanie Villeval** (20 min). Enabling transferability of « real-life » programmes, exploring the combination between an intervention’s key-functions, implementation, and context
- **Tarani Chandola** (20 min). Some methodological issues related to using Randomised Control Trial study designs in the workplace
- **Adrian Fianu** (20 min). Long term effects of an intervention program on the primary prevention of diabetes in deprived neighbourhoods of La Réunion.

Open discussion on session 2. (45 mins)
Chair: Anne McMunn

18h30
Evening Dinner. Côte Brasserie, 5 Charlotte Street, W1T 1RE

Day 2: 09h00-12h30

09h00-11h
Session 3. Debates: Controversies & points of interest
Chair: Michelle Kelly-Irving

Debate 1. “It is useful to measure health using biological markers”
*Meena Kumari* (affirmative argument 10 mins) & *Alexandra Soulier* (opposing argument 10 mins)
Rebuttals 5 min each; discussion open to the floor (10 min)

Debate 2. “Biological measurements could be used to measure public health interventions”
*Scott Montgomery* (affirmative argument 10 mins) & *Cyrille Delpierre* (opposing argument 10 mins)
Rebuttals 5 min each; discussion open to the floor (10 min)

Debate 3. “Prescribing individual behaviours always underlies public health interventions”
*Yvonne Kelly* (affirmative argument 10 min) & *Thierry Lang* (opposing argument 10 min)
Rebuttals 5 min each; discussion open to the floor (10 min)

Coffee/ Tea Break 15 mins

11h15-12h30
Session 4. Open discussion on points raised
Chair: Mel Bartley/David Blane

Some discussion points to consider: Can research on the social-to-biological transition be reconciled with appropriate interventions? Where should our focus be into facilitating the link between the two areas? How to prevent or deal with the
pervasive or unwanted consequences of research for public health? In public health can we really facilitate choices or do we always end up prescribing behaviours?

_Lunch & finish_

**Participant List**

**UCL**
- Professor Amanda Sacker
- Professor Yvonne Kelly
- Professor Mel Bartley
- Professor David Blane
- Professor Meena Kumari
- Professor Tarani Chandola
- Professor Scott Montgomery
- Dr Rebecca Lacey
- Dr Noriko Cable
- Dr Anne McMunn
- Dr Afshin Zinanawala
- Dr Jessica Abel
- Sayada Razavi

**France**
- Professor Thierry Lang
- Dr Michelle Kelly-Irving
- Dr Cyrille Delpierre
- Dr Lidia Panico
- Adrian Fianu
- Alexandra Soulier
- Melanie Villeval
- Cristina Barbosa Solis

**Planned follow-up activity**
- Transcription of the proceedings
- Transcription used as the basis of
  - An abstract submitted to the Society for Longitudinal and Life course Studies Annual Conference 2016
  - A jointly authored journal article prepared for submission to the International Journal of Longitudinal and Life course Studies.
- Plans for a follow-on workshop to be held in France